

ISLAM IN THE SCHOOL OF MADINA



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MADINA



A COMMENTARY ON THE MURSHID AL-MU'EEN

The Helping Guide to the Necessary Knowledge of the Deen

Ibn 'Ashir's work on Ash'ari Kalam,

Maliki Fiqh and Junaydi Tasawwuf

Shaykh Ahmad ibn al-Bashir al-Qalaawi
ash-Shinqeeti
d. 1272 AH (1851 CE)

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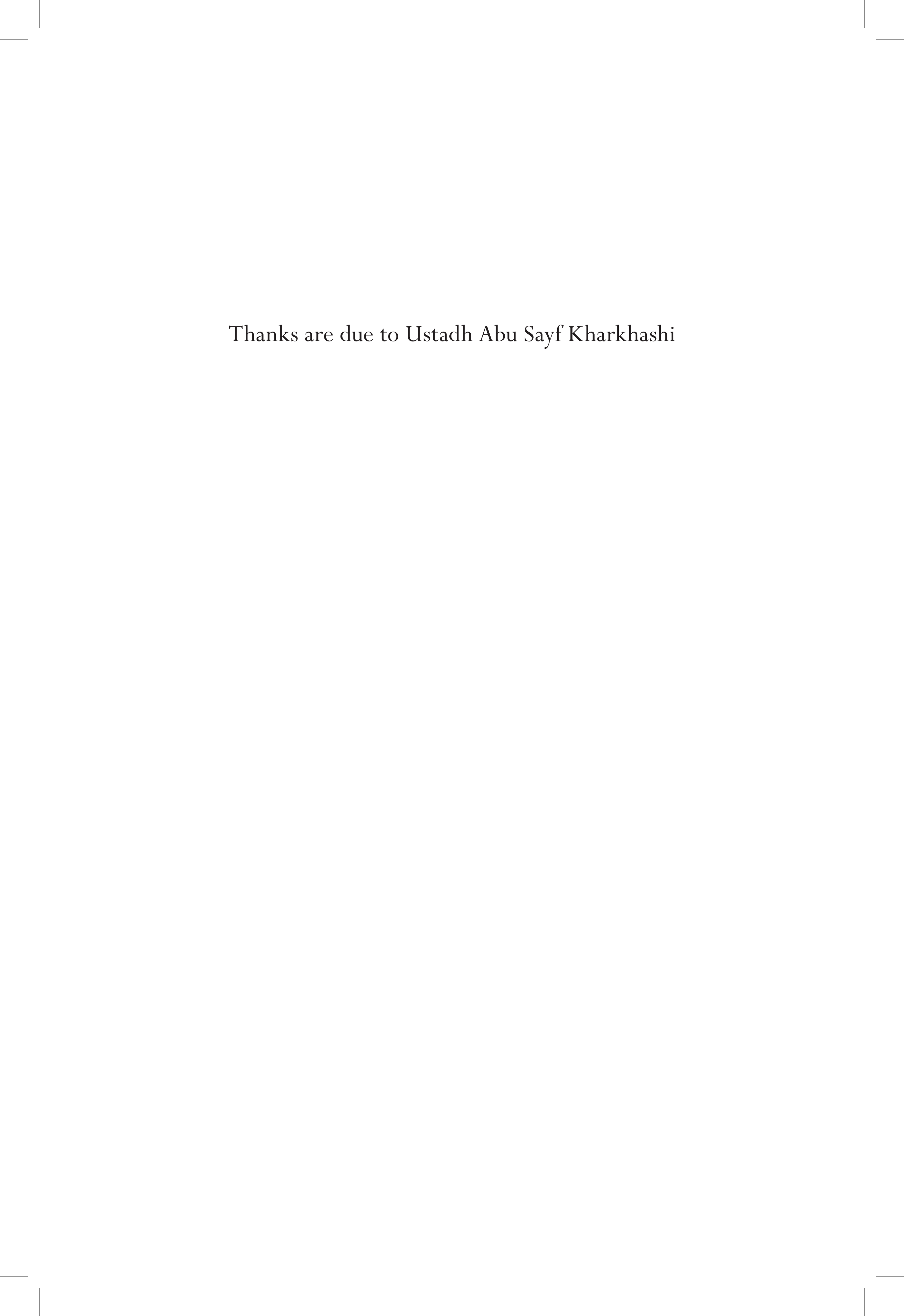
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To my teacher, the Master of the Habibiyya-Shadhiliyya Tariqa,
Shaykh Dr Abdalqadir as-Sufi





Thanks are due to Ustadh Abu Sayf Kharkhashi

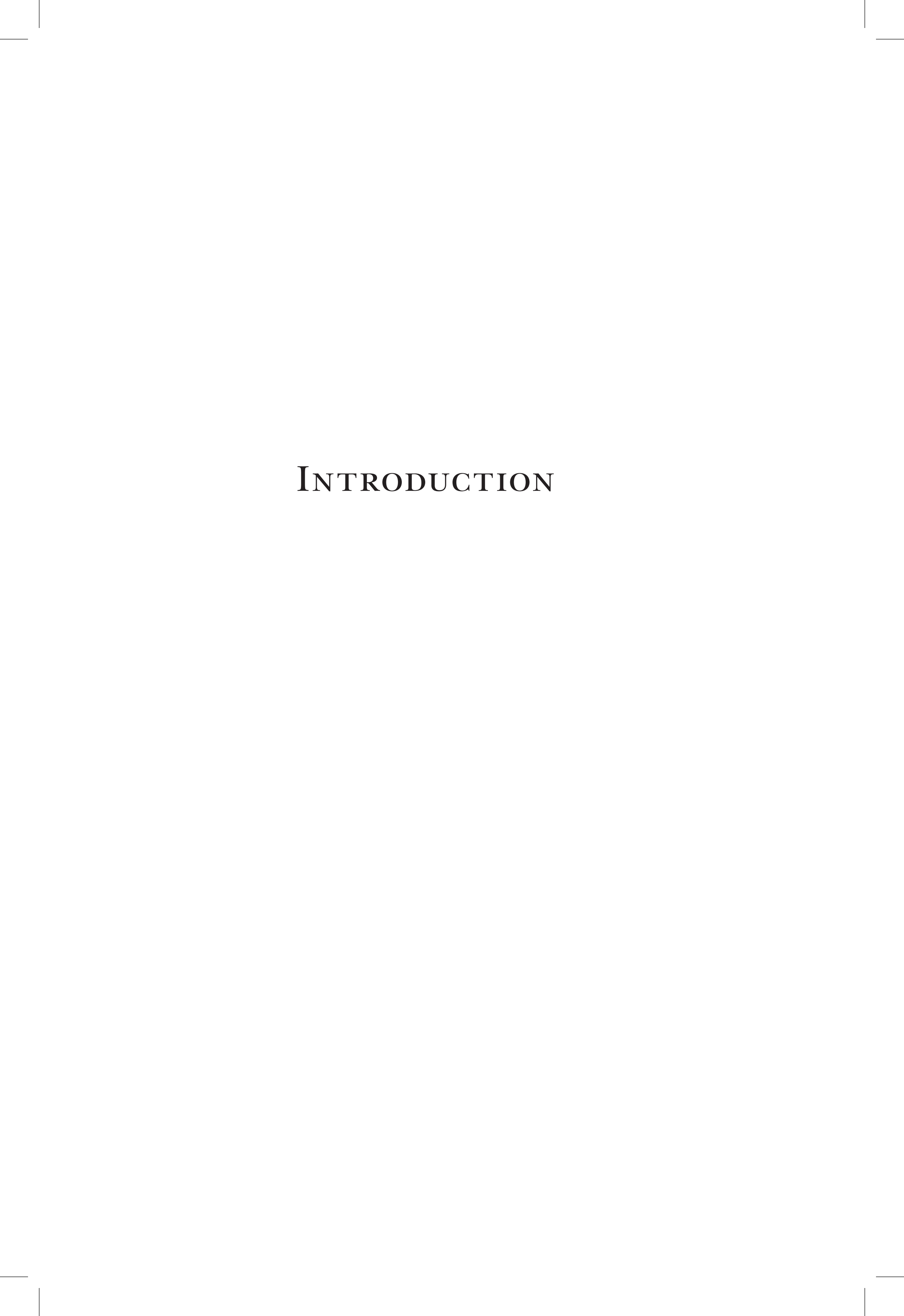


In the name of Allah, All-Merciful, Most Merciful
And may Allah bless His noble Prophet.
O Allah bless aour Master Muhammad and the Family of Muhammad



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ISLAM – FIQH



Introduction



O Allah grant peace and blessings to our Master Muhammad and his Family and Companions

A blessed beginning, a blessed end

Praise belongs to Allah Who granted us the gift of iman and Islam, Who from His generosity granted us knowledge of the halal and the haram and purified the hearts of whomever He wishes from sickness and disease.

And may Allah bless Muhammad, the best of creation, who made clear His law, both what is obligatory and recommended, and bless his Family and Companions and those who follow in his footsteps.

The needy slave, dependent upon the mercy of his Lord, Ahmad ibn al-Bashir al-Qalawi ash-Shinqeeti says: Seeking knowledge is the most important of all matters of concern, the best act of obedience and the quickest way of coming close to one's Lord, in particular in this age when people have almost come to differ about the indispensable aspects of the deen. As the poem of Shaykh Ibn 'Ashir[1] has indicated many of the sciences of the practice of the deen concisely, I want to write down some comments on it which might be of benefit, Allah,

1 The great imam, the sea of knowledge, he who made the hajj from the most distant land (*abarr*), the *mujahid*, Abu Muhammad, 'Abd al-Wahid ibn 'Ali ibn 'Ashir, of the Ansari line, originally from Andalusia, brought up in Fez which he made his home. He has compositions on various different sciences, amongst them the poem entitled *al-Murshid al-mu'een 'ala daruri min 'ulum ad-deen* about Maliki *fiqh*. It parallels the *Mukhtasar* of Khalil in that it combines both the roots and branches of the deen such that whoever reads it and understands its points is able to abandon once and for all *taqleed* – imitation – for the soundness of the iman (of the people of *taqleed*) is disputed. He is thus able to learn what Allah has made incumbent on him of the sciences necessary for each and every Muslim to know. He died in Dhu'l-Hijja 1040 AH. (*Ash-Shajara* p.299, No. 1161)

exalted is He, willing. In doing so, I shall rely on the (previous) commentators of this work, although an analysis of the text was not my actual aim but rather an imitation in the manner of al-Mawwaq's commentary of (the *Mukhtasar* of) Khalil, seeking help from Allah, glorious is He, and holding fast to His rope, His strength and His power, absolving myself of any strength or power on my part. In undertaking all my actions, I bear witness that there is no salvation or refuge from Him except by turning to Him. I am certain that He is the One Who disposes the right outcome of my affair and that it is up to Him if He punishes me for my wrong actions or forgives me.

I have referred to the commentator Mayyara,[1] and Ibn 'Abd as-Sadiq.[2] Likewise, I have referred to the *'alim* of the age, Muhammad ibn Marzuq,[3] to al-Mawwaq,[4] to Ibn al-Hattab,[5] to Ahmad Zarruq,[6] to Shaykh as-Sanusi,[7] to 'Abd

1 The *faqih*, Abu 'Abdallah Muhammad ibn Ahmad Mayyara, known for his eloquence, an imam, a man of exceedingly vast knowledge, known for his scrupulousness and his adherence to the deen. He has written various works, among them, *The Greater Commentary* and *The Lesser Commentary* on *al-Murshid al-Mu'een*. He was born in 999 AH and died in 1070. He was the student of Ibn 'Ashir. (*Ash-Shajara* p.309, No. 1200)

2 Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali ibn 'Abd as-Sadiq, one of the great men of knowledge and action, an accomplished author who sought and taught the truth, a man of *tasawwuf*. He has written a number of works, among them a commentary on *al-Murshid al-Mu'een*. I have not been able to find out when he died. (*Ash-Shajara* p.351, No. 1397)

3 Abu 'Abdallah Shams ad-Deen, Muhammad ibn Marzuq at-Tilimsani, known as al-*Khateeb* and known for his acquisition and teaching of knowledge. Born 710 AH, died 781, and buried between Ibn al-Qasim and Ashhab, may Allah have mercy on all of them. Author of many works. (*Ash-Shajara* p.236, No. 849)

4 Muhammad ibn Yusuf ibn Abu'l-Qasim al-'Abdari, known as al-Mawwaq, from Granada in Andalusia. Author of many works, among them two commentaries on the *Mukhtasar* of Khalil. Died Sha'ban, 897 AH. (*Nayl al-Ibtihaj* p.242)

5 Abu 'Abdallah Muhammad ibn al-Hattab, born and resided in Makka. Among his most famous works is the excellent and renowned commentary of great benefit on the *Mukhtasar* of Khalil, the like of which has not been surpassed. Born Ramadan 902 AH, died Rabi' ath-Thani 945. (*Ash-Shajara* p.270, No. 998)

6 The great *'alim*, the *faqih*, the *muhaddith*, the sufi, the *wali*, the *salih*, the hajji, a person of praiseworthy qualities and author of many works, Ahmad ibn Ahmad ibn 'Isa al-Barnissi, al-Fasi, known as Zarruq, born Thursday, 28th Muharram 846 AH, died 899. He has written two commentaries on *ar-Risala* and a commentary of *al-Mukhtasar* and many other works. (*Nayl al-Ibtihaj, Ash-Shajara* p.267-8, No. 988)

7 Abu 'Abdallah Muhammad ibn Yusuf as-Sanusi. At-Tilimsani, after informing us that he acquired a great deal of knowledge, that he composed various works and took on the qualities of a *wali*, mentions *The Greater and Lesser 'Aqidas* as being the most quoted from amongst his writings. Born 830 AH, died Jumada al-Akheera, 895AH. (*Ash-Shajara* p.266, No. 984)

al-Baqi,[1] to al-Khurshi – with respect to his *Greater and Lesser Commentaries,*[2] to *al-Mi'yar,*[3] to an-Nafarawi,[4] to al-Lubnani,[5] to at-Tawudi,[6] to al-Ubbi,[7] to

1 Abu Muhammad 'Abd al-Baqi ibn Yusuf ibn Ahmad az-Zurqani. Noted for his knowledge, teaching and composition. Wrote a commentary on the *Mukhtasar* of Khalil in which he seeks to encompass the widest depth and breadth of meanings. Born in Egypt, 1020 AH, died Ramadan 1099. (*Ash-Shajara* p.204, No. 1177)

2 The leading *'alim* of his age, Abu 'Abdallah al-Khurshi, one of the most brilliant of the Maliki *'ulama* of his time, composed the *Greater and Lesser commentaries* on the *Mukhtasar* of Khalil, died in Egypt 1101 AH. (*Ash-Shajara* p.317, No. 1234)

3 Referring to the book *al-Mi'yar al-mu'rib wa'l-jami' al-mughrib 'an fatawi ahl Ifriqiyya wa'l-Andalus wa'l-Maghrib*, *(The Measure that makes clear, and the Compendium that goes furthest, on the fatwas of the people of Tunisia, Andalusia and the Maghrib)*, 13 volumes, a work which may be described as an encyclopaedia of Maliki *fiqh*; its author – Abu'l-'Abbas Ahmad ibn Yahya ibn Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahid al-Wansharisi. The Shaykh of the community in al-Maghrib, the Imam Muhammad ibn Ghazi said: "If a man were to swear to divorce his wife, swearing that Abu'l-'Abbas Ahmad al-Wansharisi had mastered the Maliki *madhhab*, both in its roots and branches, then he would be keeping to his oath but his wife would not be divorced on the basis of this oath." (*Nayl al-Ibtihaj* p.87-88, and his biographical notice is in the first volume of the published edition of the *Mi'yar*)

4 Abu'l-'Abbas Ahmad ibn Ghaneem Salim an-Nafarawi, the *faqih*, the *'alim*, the support and pillar, the one who seeks and teaches the truth, the towering intellect, the author and paragon; leadership of the *madhhab* came to him; among his writings, a famous commentary on the *Risala*; died 1125 AH at the age of 82 years. (*Ash-Shajara* p.318, No. 1239)

5 The *'alim* of his age Abu 'Abdallah Muhammah ibn al-Hasan al-Bannani, unequalled in his time; he composed many finely executed writings of benefit, among them the gloss on the commentary of Shaykh 'Abd al-Baqi on the *Mukhtasar* of Khalil on which his fame and acceptance as an *'alim* rests; born 1113 AH, died 1194. (*Ash-Shajara* p.357, No. 1426)
The *'ulama* have stipulated that in order for az-Zurqani's view to be accepted, it must first conform to the way of at-Tawudi or al-Bannani. The talented poet al-Qalawi ash-Shinqeeti said:

Az-Zurqani's view is not complete
Except together with at-Tawudi or al-Bannani

6 At-Tawudi whom we also know under the name of at-Tudi – although that is a grammatical mistake; his full name was Abu 'Abdallah at-Tawudi ibn Muhammad at-Talib ibn Suda al-Mazzi al-Fasi al-Qurashi; he has composed works of great conciseness and accuracy and of great benefit, among them a gloss on the commentary of az-Zurqani on the *Mukhtasar* which he named the *Tali' al-Amani* (*Fortunate Desires*); born in 1111 AH, died 1193. (*Ash-Shajara* p.372, No. 1486)

7 Abu 'Abdallah Muhammad ibn Khalaf known as al-Ubbi, a skilled writer, author of *Ikmal al-Ikmal (Completion of the Completion)*, a commentary on Muslim, the student of the great *'alim* of his age, Ibn 'Arafa; died 828 AH. (*Ash-Shajara* p.244, No. 874)

his shaykh Ibn 'Arafa,[1] to the shaykh of Ibn 'Arafa, Ibn 'Abd as-Salam,[2] to his student Ibn Naji,[3] to *at-Tawdih*,[4] and finally to al-Munawi's great commentary on *al-Jami' as-Saghir* (*The Lesser Compendium*).[5]

Know that the aim of this commentary – may Allah accept it by His overflowing generosity and by the rank and glory of Muhammad, His Prophet, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and on his Family and Companions – is to remove any confusion, to explain any strange terms in ordinary language, but not to transmit things of common knowledge or well known matters, except in questions of *'aqida*.

The nature of this commentary is such that with regard to recommended matters, I have tended to indulgence and tolerance whereas with regard to the laws, I have taken special pains to explain exactly, concisely and exhaustively – and help in all of this has been from Allah, glorious is He. Part of the character of this work, too, is that when I have transmitted an unfamiliar matter from the books of the later writers, like al-Amir[6] and an-Nafarawi and then found

1 Abu 'Abdallah Muhammad ibn ash-Shaykh – who was blessed with him – Muhammad ibn 'Arafa al-Waraghmi at-Tunisi, imam and *khateeb* at the main *jami'* mosque for fifty years; composed many works, among them his *Mukhtasar*, a compendium of *fiqh*, a commentary on the *hudud* and others; he was unique as a Shaykh, imam, in passing *fatwas* and in acceptance throughout his life; born 716 AH, died 803 AH. (*Ash-Shajara* p.227, No. 817) Among his most famous students were al-Ubbi and al-Barzali.

2 The judge of the community in Tunis, Abu 'Abdallah, Muhammad ibn 'Abd as-Salam al-Hawwari, at-Tunisi; he was the Shaykh of the above-mentioned Ibn 'Arafa; he excelled in both transmitted (*naqli*) and intellectual (*'aqli*) sciences; he has an accomplished commentary on the *Mukhtasar* of Ibn Hajib; died 749 AH of the plague. (*Ash-Shajara* p.210, No. 731)

3 Abu'l-Fadl Qasim ibn 'Isa ibn Naji at-Tanukhi al-Qayrawani, an imam, *faqih*, sharp sighted and sagacious, a pillar of generosity, a just judge, author and master of the revealed laws; he has a commentary on the *Risala* and two commentaries on the *Mudawwana* and other writings; died at Qayrawan 838 AH. (*Ash-Shajara* p.244-5, No. 878). He is the pupil of Ibn 'Arafa as the author mentions.

4 Commentary by Khalil ibn Ishaq al-Maliki, the author of the famous *Mukhtasar*, on the *Mukhtasar* of Ibn al-Hajib; Khalil died 767 AH. (*Ash-Shajara* p.223, No. 794)

5 The major ommentary (called *al-Fayd al-Kabir*) of Muhammad 'Abd ar-Ra'uf al-Munawi on the *Lesser Compendium (al-Jami' as-Saghir)* of as-Suyuti, six volumes; born in 952 AH/1545 CE, died 1030 AH/1621 CE.

6 Abu 'Abdallah Muhammad, known as al-Amir, the nickname of his closest grandfather, the family originally being from the Maghrib, but then settled in Egypt, noted for his learning and teaching and his profound research into all branches of knowledge, author of many works, amongst which the *Compendium, commentary and gloss on Shaykh az-Zurqani's commentary on the Mukhtasar* of Khalil; born 1154 AH, died Dhu'l-Qa'da 1232. (*Ash-Shajara* p.262-3, No. 1446)

it in reliable books like those of al-Munawi and Ibn 'Arafa and the like, then I have nevertheless transmitted it so that it might serve as a proof.

The reason I have called this work by the title of *The Book of Benefit for both the beginners and the learned among the slaves*[1] is that someone came to one of the brothers in a dream and advised him to name it by this name.

And beware – O reader, who examine this work – lest shaytan say to you "This is a new work and its author was not someone of knowledge, nor someone who held to the pure deen" such that it leads you to desist altogether from the book or to criticise it without any foundation. Rather study and reflect upon it: anything you find to have sprung from my own imagination or to be a product of my mind then it is up to you whether you accept or reject it. However, you must be equitable, for dealing with this subject is a noble profession and you will not – insha'Allah glorious is He, – encounter it very often. Whatever I have found from the '*ulama* – and you find it correct – then it will save you from having to look it up in the original; if you do not find it correct, then the onus is on them not on me. Therefore look, may Allah have mercy on you, with the intention of finding instruction and hopefully you will be guided thereby. As-Sanusi said in his *Middle Commentary* that it has been said: "No one listens with the intention of finding instruction but that he is guided and no one intends to disobey but that Allah prohibits him from being guided." Indeed I state, as al-Munawi said at the beginning of his *Commentary*: "O you who investigate, do so by looking into the matter exhaustively with the eye of solicitousness and perfect understanding. Do not pervert the words or meanings merely because you look down upon the author and do not allow the veil of your self to prevent you from attaining the truth. If you do chance upon a mistake or mistakes, or I have committed an error or errors then know that I do not shrink from recognising such faults and I am not exempt from such lapses." Then he goes on: "Allah, glorious is He, has mercy on someone who conquers his desires, on someone who heeds the call of justice and makes justice his goal, on someone who is not inclined to obduracy – but not on someone who when he intends a thing and sees good in it, conceals it or who when he sees a fault, manifests it and spreads it abroad. So let him ponder the matter in a fair manner, without envy or deviousness. Know that whoever seeks faults will find them and perfection is ascribed only to the Majestic."

1 This is a literal rendering of the original title of the work in Arabic which is based on an *ayat* of Qur'an (See "*equally for those who live near it and those who come from far away*". Al-Hajj – The Pilgrimage: 23). Trans.

‘Abd al-Wahid ibn ‘Ashir

The author of the poem, Ibn ‘Ashir, says:

يَقُولُ عَبْدُ الْوَاحِدِ بْنُ عَاشِرِ

مُبْتَدِئاً بِاسْمِ الإِلَهِ الْقَادِرِ

1 ‘Abd al-Wahid ibn ‘Ashir says, beginning with the name of the Powerful God

Mayyara says: “The author, may Allah, exalted is He, have mercy on him, begins by naming himself because it is of the utmost importance in this situation: it is well known that working from or taking *fatwas* from books is not permitted if one does not know their author or one is unsure of the soundness of their contents.”

Imam al-Qarafi said: “Taking *fatwas* from books written recently is not permitted if what is transmitted in them cannot be clearly traced to reputable books; unless it is known that their author is from amongst those one can rely on for the soundness of their knowledge, because documents are valid only by their integrity and probity. Likewise, it is prohibited to take *fatwas* from unfamiliar books or books which have no reputation until people have had time to consider them properly and to assess whether the knowledge contained in them is correct or not. Likewise, it is prohibited to take them from the (hand-written) margins or glosses of books because one cannot rely on them absolutely.”

Ibn Farhun said: “What he refers to here is if the gloss has been transmitted by an unfamiliar author. However, if what is written is to be found in the well-accepted source books or its source is acknowledged and it is in the handwriting of someone who can be trusted then there is no difference between this and any other book.”

Hamd –Praise

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي عَلَّمَنَا

مِنَ الْعُلُومِ مَا بِهِ كَلَّفَنَا

2 Praise belongs to Allah Who has taught us the sciences which He has made incumbent upon us.

Al-Munawi said: "Praise belongs to Allah – i.e. The description of beauty is either owned by or is deserved by Allah, exalted is He. It does not extend from Him to any other than Him. He did not suffice himself with naming (Him with the *bismillah*) because of who He is and because of what people have agreed upon as customary, namely that this (beginning) point (in the work) should be one of magnifying Him. Therefore it is fitting that there be a clear mention of praise. The person who restricts himself to the *bismillah* – despite its containing an aspect of praise (*hamd*) within it – is not normally known as someone who praises (*hamid*). For this reason there arises a kind of manifest contention between the two hadiths referring to beginning (affairs with the *bismillah* or with praise) and it is necessary to harmonise the two in the following manner: the beginning of something is either a literal beginning – in which the thing (under discussion) is mentioned explicitly from the outset, or it is relative, in which case it is mentioned relative to something rather than some other thing. This latter corresponds to the mention of *hamd*, which does not refer to the actual essence of the matter. Thus, the literal beginning is specific to the *bismillah* in which mention of the essence is made, while in the *hamd* mention of the attribute is made. The *bismillah*, then, must come before the *hamd* insofar as the one should precede the other in rank when beginning a work.

"Some have plagiarised what he stated and ascribed it to themselves after producing far-fetched, doubtful arguments and incorrect suppositions. Some have claimed that the aim of every introductory word or phrase is achieved by (just) one of the two or whatever fulfils this function in their stead. Thus one may be used to express the other such that sometimes the *bismillah* is used, sometimes the *al-hamdulillah*, sometimes even neither of the two. Some have argued that when treating a disease it is necessary to begin with one of the affected parts rather than (the simultaneous treatment of) all of them. It has also been said that the two phrases of the *bismillah* and *al-hamdulillah* are mutually incompatible in this instance and mentioning both of them ceases to be necessary as in the case of (mentioning both) when making (repeated) washings of (something sullied by the licking of a) dog. However, (Ibn 'Ashir) is referring to the more general meaning, that is the general meaning of the *dhikr* (of His name) and the (mention of) *hamd* rather than any particular meaning. Do you not see that the Legislator does not begin most of the actions of the *shari'ah* specifically with *al-hamd* – like the *salat*, the *adhan*, the hajj, for example. Rather, He indicates that what is intended is the manifestation of an aspect of perfection and this is achieved, for example, in the *salat* by the *takbir*

and on the hajj by the required *dhikrs* when putting on the *ihram*. This does not apply to what has been said above. A general resolution (of the matter) is difficult to obtain from (the example to be had in) the outward form of the *salat* and the *adhan*. This is the result of my collecting together the answers which have satisfied the *'ulama*. There are also many famous responses and many explanations which are weak in nature. They have been analysed critically in the commentary entitled *Al-Bahja*, a work unparalleled in its contents."

In the *Lesser Compendium* there is another tradition (indicating the saying of a formula at the outset of an event which is other than *bismillah* or *al-hamdulillah*): "Whatever blessings (*ni'ma*) – be it with respect to family, wealth or children – Allah bestows on a slave who then says

مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

'That which Allah wills (happens), (there is) no power except by Allah', and then he will see no harm or loss to this (blessing) but death...." There is also: "Allah, exalted is He does not bestow a blessing on a slave – who then says '*al-hamdulillah*' – but that (in doing so) he makes (fitting) thanks for it. If he says it a second time, then Allah will renew his reward for it. If he says it a third time, then Allah will forgive him his wrong actions."

Knowledge

Commenting on Ibn 'Ashir's saying: "Who has taught us" Mayyara said "Who" refers to the majestic name (Allah)[1] and "the sciences which He has made incumbent upon us" refer to the knowledge which is obligatory on each and every *mukallaf* – (the person who is fully responsible and legally capable) – that is, the knowledge needed to carry out an obligatory action, without which the action in question would not be properly completed."

It is necessary at this point to make an introduction which makes mention of some important points even if this means making a lengthy explanation which might bore the reader – and which would be a shortcoming and lack of attention on the part of the author. But, *insha'Allah*, you will find precious things which will make up for or compensate most generously for any deficiency.

He[2] said in *Nur al-Basar*: "The seeker of knowledge should intend (to obtain) detailed knowledge if he is able; if not, then a general understanding such that

1 i.e. the One Who has taught us is Allah. Ed.

2 Ahmad ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Filali al-Hilali as-Sijilmasi. *Nur al-Basar* is a commentary on the *Mukhtasar Khalil*. Ed.

he is in a position to carry out what is personally binding on him; whatever goes beyond this, then he should make the intention of acquiring knowledge, on behalf of people, of what is obligatory on the community as a whole (*fard kifaya*). He should not restrict himself to making the intention to undertake something which is (merely) recommended (*nadb*) as the reward for what is obligatory is far greater. He should also make the intention to put into action whatever Allah has apprised him of personally and to hope and expect that Allah teaches him everything that it is possible to learn; to be successful in teaching it for the benefit of (various) ranks and grades (of people) by means of (both) knowledge and action until the Day of Rising; to busy himself with obedience to Allah and turning from acts of disobedience – such that his obedience prevents him from superfluities, which if there was nothing else but that they would be a waste of one's life which is one's capital that would be sufficient in itself to drive any person of intellect away from them. How could this come about? he would be occupying the Noble Scribes (recording one's actions) with something containing no good. He would have to relate (these acts of) arrogance to the witnessing angels on the Day of Rising when they say to him: "*Read your Book! Today your own self is reckoner enough against you!*'"[1].

And he will be covered in shame in the place of terror and calamity, he will be hungry, thirsty and naked, his despair will increase in the knowledge that he did not busy himself with correct actions during his time of superfluity, actions of which he stands in profound need at this particular time and place. He will be reprimanded in this tremendous place and will be asked: 'Why did you do this? Why did you say this?' All argument in his favour will cease before the Knower of Unseen Realities and he will fall into confusion, unable to reply. If this then is his state after mere superfluities then what would it be if he had been guilty of disobedience? I ask Allah, glorious is He, for forgiveness and mercy."

He has also indicated, the noble hadith: "Surely actions are by intentions…" – that actions are only valid by the intention such that whoever intends good by an action then he has good (written) for him and whoever intends bad by it then bad is (written) against him; whoever intends a thing which is licit but of no obvious merit (*mubah*), then it is without profit. If the form of such an (action) is one of worship then, at times, it can be worship, at other times disobedience and sometimes purely superfluous – like the prostration, for example, which is an act of worship if made to Allah, exalted is He, and *kufr* if made to an idol, and an act of disobedience – without attaining the rank of

1 Al-Isra, The Night Journey: 14

kufr – if made in order to extol the Sultan without actually believing that he is the Lord. Occupying oneself with knowledge is the best of all good actions if one intends thereby to follow the command of Allah, exalted is He, and to put it into action. It is disobedience if one intends thereby to set oneself proudly over one's peers or to obtain wealth via haram means like bribery or take what is granted of ill-gotten gains.

A person may also be described as exaggerated in his behaviour if he makes the intention to avoid something which is licit but of which he has no specific need – if he is aware of this. The most important thing for the person of intellect and in particular for the one given to the learning and teaching of knowledge is first to correct his intention and secondly to cause it to grow. As for correcting (the intention), it is that he turns it away from corrupt aims and turns it towards goals which are good. Thus he makes the intention to do whatever he has been commanded to do and to abandon what he has been prohibited from doing. This would then be accordance with the command of Allah, exalted is He, to perform or to abandon what is *mubah* while seeking thereby only help in remaining obedient – so that all his movements and times of rest are acts of obedience. As for causing his intention to grow, it is that he examines whatever he is determined to do or not to do: if he finds that such-and-such an undertaking most probably contains aspects of good, then he intends (not just one but) all the aspects."

Then he continues after a lengthy discussion: "In short, every movement or moment of rest which a person is subject to is necessarily either commanded – as an obligation or recommendation – or prohibited – as totally illicit (haram) or disliked; or thirdly, that which is (merely) licit – *mubah*. The least a person of intellect should make the intention for is to undertake the first of the two divisions, that is, to follow the command of Allah in doing it and in the second of the divisions to follow the command of Allah in abandoning it. In the third division, his intention in the matter is his being aware that Allah, exalted is He, has been generous to him in making it licit for him and that had He prohibited him from it he would not have done it. If he is able to cause these intentions to grow, then to him belongs the reward in accordance with whatever he intends." (Here ends the text of *Nur al-Basar*).

Muhammad ibn Abu'l-Hasan, the author of *Majma' al-Ahbab*, may Allah grant us benefit by him, says – after talking of the need to intensify one's search for sincerity: "What one needs to be aware of is that the intention – if one is sincere in seeking after knowledge – is not impeded in this by the passion of the self for imparting and teaching knowledge. The self has its tricks and

it commands to what is evil and shaytan has power over man – if he despairs of attacking him by way of acts of disobedience, then he approaches him by the door of good actions in another, incognito, form by giving good advice to him saying: 'Avoid that as you desire it.' This argument, as we have said, is invalidated by the mere act of determining this causality: the joy experienced by the self when possessing power is an inborn thing which cannot be rejected as power is a quality of excellence. Likewise, pre-eminence in knowledge and the inclination of the self to such a thing is a help and aid to acquiring knowledge, especially at the beginning – in the sense that if such a thing did not exist in human nature, then knowledge would not be acquired. It is not possible to remove the trace of these things from the self – anyone who imagines that he can have sexual intercourse without pleasure or that he can hold a conversation without delighting in dominating the talk then he is imagining the inconceivable. Indeed, there is nothing in any of this which can harm the deen in any way. What one must strive after however, as we have said above, is to avoid excessive dominance in conversation, conceit and pride and other bad qualities which prevent one from achieving one's goal."

Then after speaking at some length he says: "Rely on five principles: the halal, sincerity, intention, truthfulness and whatever contains what is right for the heart – for the actions (of those mentioned above) depend on these (five). In this way one may discern the nature of the excuse of those who abstain from imparting and teaching knowledge as well as recognising the pure aim of those who act according to these five principles. And why should it not be like this? There is no rank above that of the *'alim* who acts upon his knowledge, other than prophethood, especially if he puts this knowledge into action, propagates it and has as his goal the face of Allah, glorious is He. He may rejoice a thousand times if the matter is as we have mentioned – for surely this joy is not detrimental to his deen in any way, and neither is it reprehensible. Indeed, more than one of the former and latter imams have described that this kind of joy is to be sought after, that it is one branch of iman and that there is no doubt in this. Look at the Imams of the deen, the Companions, the Followers and the Followers of the Followers and all those *fuqaha* of the major cities who came after them, may Allah be pleased with all of them. Were there any amongst them who prevented the spreading of knowledge or its teaching for the purpose mentioned above? Imam Malik and others of the Imams before him and after him, may Allah, glorious is He, be pleased with them, would sit for the sake of hadith and none of them would turn his attention to what was termed "a worldly subject." If they had

attached importance to this, knowledge would have vanished and people would have remained in their blindness and would have destroyed each other.

Jussous said in his commentary on the words of the *ar-Risala* "They stop at the limit set for them" that this is an indication that part of the good behaviour of the *muminun* whose hearts have been illuminated by knowledge is their stopping at the limits (*hudud*) of the *shari'ah* and desisting from anything prohibited them by the people of knowledge. The stopping of the slave at the limits means not going outside what his Lord has prescribed as limits for him – for surely Allah has addressed him with the five (types of) prescription, saying: "This you may do or not do, and this you must do, and this you must desist from doing, and this has a reward in it for you although there is no punishment if you desist from doing it and the opposite to this (i.e. this has a punishment…)." Thus if the slave acts in accordance with what his Lord has prescribed for him, then he is fulfilling the contract Allah, exalted is He, has made binding on him. This in turn means he is being grateful and this gratitude is the gratitude which is incumbent on all the responsible slaves (*mukallifun*), and which manifests in obedience to everything contained in the *shari'ah*. Thus what He has made obligatory, we have made obligatory for ourselves, what He has made haram we have made haram, what He has permitted we have permitted and so on for everything else. This applies in a similar manner to the oath of allegiance to the Messenger of Allah, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. Action with knowledge is its aim and its purpose. Knowledge is the means to action, like *wudu'* in relation to the *salat*.

Know that knowledge is a blessing and action is another blessing. The slave should ask his Lord, glorious is He, for each one of them separately saying: "O Allah, show me the truth as the truth and grant me the gift of being able to follow it, and show me the false as the false and grant me the gift of being able to avoid it." The imam, Shihab ad-Deen al-Qarafi said: "Whoever acts in accordance with what he knows has obeyed Allah twice over, whoever does not know and does not act has disobeyed Allah twice over and whoever knows but does not act has obeyed Allah once and disobeyed him once."

Knowledge without action is a blessing and a mercy for those who do not study this (knowledge) with a corrupt intention. If he does study it with a sound and perfect intention or with an intention which is not devoid of perfect sincerity then it is as if he has studied it in order to purify his self from the darkness which affects others and to obtain a rank by virtue of which he is raised above his own self (*nafs*). In other words he should not study in order to remove from the *nafs* something that it has already no need of; or study without an intention

from the outset. As for those who study it with the intention of collecting and storing it, who imagine they are free of self deception and who harbour no fear or anxiety, being content with their *nafs* – such persons are flawed in their understanding and they will enjoy no mercy, unless *tawba* comes to them. Our Shaykh, the seeker after and teacher of the truth, says in the commentary on the *Hikam*: "By this he restricts the general import of al-Qarafi's words 'whoever has knowledge but does not act upon it.' The stopping at the limits with respect to the people of incorruptibility is not allowing oneself to fall into wrongdoing at all. With respect to other than them, it is not persisting in wrongdoing. This is the result of knowledge and its benefit. His fatigue is not from striving after what is false and he does not waste the precious moments of his life for something without profit or wealth. It is in this way that the *'alim* obtains the honour and esteem of this world and the next – as the poet said:

Knowledge is only obtained through action,
understand al-'Ubayd's word
If, in knowledge, there were a weapon for the young man,
Iblis would have been the equal of al-Junayd

It is by action that knowledge is fixed in the world and persists. It is as has been said: 'Knowledge calls for action: if it finds it, it stays and if not it moves on.' It is by action that the *zakat* – purification – of knowledge is made and thereby grows. It is by action that one may perceive the secrets and gifts of divine knowledge 'from *ladun*', that is from His presence – all of which one has no access to by acquired learning.

Allah, exalted is He, says: '*Have taqwa of Allah and Allah will give you knowledge*'[1] and he, may peace and blessings be upon him, said: 'Whoever acts on what he knows, Allah, exalted is He, will transmit to him a knowledge that he did not have'[2] or words to this effect. There is also a distinction made between knowledge which is useful for its people – about which many *ayats* have been mentioned in the Book and innumerable references in the sunna – and knowledge which is not useful from which the Messenger of Allah, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, sought refuge and which he mentioned as being a threat to its people.

As for what has been recorded of the first, the saying of Allah, exalted is He: '*He gives wisdom to whomever He wills*'[3] in which 'wisdom' refers to knowledge.

1 al-Baqara – The Cow: 282

2 The hadith of Muslim also supports this: "Whoever goes along a path seeking by it knowledge, then Allah will cause him to take a path to the Garden."

3 al-Baqara – The Cow: 269

There is also the saying of Allah, exalted is He: '*Only those of His slaves with knowledge have fear of Allah*'[1] indicating that fear is restricted to such slaves. This fear is also the characteristic of the Prophets and the Angels in the heavens. Likewise there is His saying: '*Allah will raise in rank those of you who have* iman *and those who have been given knowledge*'[2], the hadith: 'The best of actions is the seeking knowledge' and 'One *'alim* is harder on shaytan than a thousand worshipping slaves and the angels lower their wings over the seeker of knowledge, content with what he is seeking.' The Prophet, peace and blessings upon him, said: 'Be either someone of knowledge or someone who learns, or who listens (to knowledge) or who loves (knowledge) and do not be a fifth and so perish.' This latter person is detested by the *'ulama*." Here end the words of Jussous.

Then after continuing for a while he says: "As for what has been mentioned of the second type – 'The person who will be punished the most severely will be the *'alim* who has not put his knowledge to good use for Allah, exalted is He.' It has also been reported: 'Woe to the person who has not acquired knowledge once and woe to the person who has acquired knowledge and has not acted (upon it) a thousand times.' Al-Fudail ibn 'Iyad and Asad ibn al-Furat have said: 'It has come to our notice that the corrupt of the *'ulama* and those who have learnt the Qur'an will be dealt with before the worshippers of idols.' The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: 'There are three (types of) judges: two judges in the Fire and one in the Garden. As for the one in the Garden, it is the man who knew the truth and judged according to it; as for the two in the Fire, it is the man who knew the truth but deliberately acted unjustly in (giving his) judgement and the man who based his judgements on other than (the basis of) knowledge and who was ashamed of saying 'I do not know.'" Here ends the point he is making.

Then he says after a while that al-Qalshani said of the saying: 'The most important of knowledges is the best knowledge' – "know, O brother, may Allah grant us and you success in being obedient to Him, that knowledge – wherever it may occur in the speech of Allah, glorious is He, and the speech of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah grant him peace and blessings, is an occasion of ennobling and conferring honour. What is meant by this is useful knowledge, one which curbs and stifles desire. What bears testimony to the existence of knowledge which is sought for the sake of Allah is fear (*khashya*) and what testifies to the existence of fear is that one is successful (in acquiring

1 Fatir – The Bringer into Being: 28

2 al-Mujadila – The Disputer: 11

knowledge). As for knowledge which is accompanied by a longing after this world, by flattering its people and directing one's enthusiasm towards acquiring it, towards collecting it and storing it up, by vying with each other in vain and boastful pursuits, gathering more and more (things of this world), by challenging those in a position and leadership, by opposition to one's peers, competing with them, by drawing out one's hopes (with respect to things of this world), corrupt actions, being hard of heart, committing actions which incur the anger of the Lord, preferring this world and forgetting the next – how far removed is such knowledge, how far away is the person of such a character from being judged as being amongst the 'heirs of the Prophets.' Is it not true that what is inherited can only be transferred to someone when he possesses a character similar to that possessed by the one making the inheritance? The likeness of these characteristics, that is characteristics of the *'ulama*, is the likeness of a candle which lights up that which is other than it while it itself burns up. Allah has made the knowledge He has taught to a person of this other type a proof against him and a reason for an intensifying of the punishment against him. However, do not be in any doubt that both the experienced person and the beginner will benefit by it for the Messenger of Allah, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: 'Allah will surely support this deen by means of a corrupt man.'

The likeness of someone who acquires knowledge in order to obtain (something of) this world and to get high rank and standing in it is like someone who clears away filth with a ruby spoon: What a noble instrument and how contemptible that which is obtained!

The likeness of someone who devotes his time to seeking knowledge, spending forty years acquiring it, but who does not act according to it is like the person who sits for this same length of time cleaning himself and renewing his *wudu'* but does not pray a single *salat*. Thus the object of knowledge is action just as the object of purification is *salat*."

All this has been transmitted by Sayyidi Ibn 'Abbad from the *Lata'if al-Minan* and *at-Tanweer* and likewise from Shaykh Zarruq. And following his words: "Is it not true that what is inherited can only be transferred…?" he says: "In it there is an indication that the *'alim* without *taqwa* is not an heir. However, this should be examined because corrupting what is inherited and acting upon it for (a purpose) other than what is true does not undo the fact that the heir (of this knowledge) actually inherits. Disobedience does not undo the ties (of the deen). Rather one says of him that he is an evil heir and the like. Allah, exalted is He, has confirmed that knowledge belongs to those who have *taqwa* of Him

but at the same time He has not denied its existence in someone who has no *taqwa* – so take note.” Here end the words of Zarruq in the eleventh chapter of this commentary on the *Hikam*.

Our Shaykh, the *muhaqqiq* (the verifier of true knowledge), says in his commentary on the *Hikam*: “And the answer is to be found in his words: ‘Disobedience does not undo the ties (of the deen)’ that there are two ties: firstly, the general one and that is Islam by which a general matter is inherited, that is to be comprised in the ummah which has answered [the call of the Prophet] which is dependent on a general matter, which is one’s belief and articulation [of it]; as for the special tie, it is the tie of proximity and election by which a particular matter is inherited, that is, to be comprised in the sons of the deen and the successors of the messengers. This particularity is based on good action and it is annulled by disobedience although proximity in itself and election are not annulled merely by disobedience but rather disobedience is utterly shameless. Sheer disobedience annuls the perfection of a person’s [proximity] and what is spoken about in *at-Tanweer* is with regard to shameless disobedience – up to his words ‘As for knowledge….’ This then is what he said and Allah knows best.” With the omission of some of it.

There is no doubt that there is no good in knowledge which is not accompanied by a deep rooted fear – anyone, for example, who imagines he is safe from self-deception and who does not take care about what he does, who believes that his acquisition of knowledge is enough for him in all respects and that he has no longer any need of acquiring (rewards through good actions) or avoiding (punishment through bad actions); who believes people are as cows, or sheep and goats to be watched over by him, and who treats them as if they have only been created to serve the likes of him and to humble themselves to those like him, who considers that he himself is of great importance, that the harmony of the world is dependent upon his existence and that he is from among the imams and *‘ulama* in whose hands rests the correctness of the deen and the *dunya*. Such a person reckons that Allah, glorious is He, will transform his evil actions into good ones. Anyone of this type, then, possesses nothing but evil and his knowledge becomes a curse on him. It results only in an increase in *fitna* around him and this is referred to in the words of the *Hikam*: “What knowledge does an *‘alim* have who is content with his *nafs*.” This is what the words of *at-Tanweer* are referring to, and Allah, exalted is He, knows best. There are other, similar things mentioned about evil *‘ulama* together with harsh threats to them contained in the texts above and others.

He also says in *at-Tanweer*: ‘Useful knowledge is that which is used to help

towards obedience of Allah, exalted is He, and which binds you to fear of Allah, glorious is He: knowledge of Allah and knowledge of that which He has commanded as long as this has been acquired for the sake of Allah. Sayyidi Ibn 'Abbad, may Allah be pleased with him, said: 'Know that (the definition of) useful knowledge – about which the earliest generations and those following them are all in agreement – is that it is knowledge which guides the one who possesses it to fear and awe; to taking on humility and humbleness, taking on a character steeped in iman, to a harmonisation of the secret and the public and all that is implied in this, namely, hatred of this world and doing without in it, preferring the next world to it, being constant in one's relationship to Allah glorious is He, vying with each other in it, taking care to reflect upon the reasons for acting correctly and always acting with *adab* before Allah. Such a person naturally inclines to all these qualities, indeed actively seeks them and endeavours to preserve them. He is aware of the reasons and causes which may prevent him from attaining them, transforming them rather – through his rejection of them – into sublime attributes whose only aim and purpose is the establishment of the sunna. All this enables him to acquire the benefits of knowledge and its fruits in this world and the next. If the seeker, after knowledge, is void of this or even part of this, then if what he was seeking after was knowledge of (inner) realities, this becomes an argument against him; and if he sought after formal knowledge then it becomes a curse clinging to him, may we be granted refuge with Allah glorious is He, from that.'

Al-Hasan said: "As for the man who seeks knowledge, it is not long before this begins to show in his taking on the attribute of fear in his dress, his glance, his speech, his mode and manner, and his doing without. If a man acquires an aspect of knowledge and he acts upon it, then it is better for him than everything in the world – if, that is, he invests it in the next world. But there will surely come a time upon people in which truth and falsehood becomes confused for them. When this is so, then only *du'a* will be of benefit, like the *du'a* of the person drowning."

Al-Fudail ibn 'Iyad said: "The *'ulama* were a source of joy, as welcome as the spring-time for the people; if the sick person saw them, recovering his health would cease to preoccupy him and if the poor person caught sight of them, he would have no desire to become wealthy. However, today they have become a *fitna* for people."

Sayyidi Ibn 'Abbad said: "This applied to his time when behaviour was correct – what if he were to experience this time of ours? '*surely we belong to Allah and surely to Him we are returning*.'"

What these imams have said, may Allah be pleased with them and may Allah benefit us by them, is true by its very nature, of this there is no doubt. However, it is not fitting that it be taken as a general rule but rather it is an indication of the path of the *'arifun* and the way of *salikun*. If however, it is taken as a general rule, this may lead to the abandonment of knowledge and its people and to a bad opinion of those who transmit it because those of the description mentioned above are exceedingly rare. They are individuals of limited numbers throughout the centuries, several thousands of them, such as al-Fudhail, al-Junayd, Ma'ruf and ad-Darani – may He be praised Who gave them gifts, Who helped and strengthened them. However, it is not permitted to look down on or despise others who are not of their ilk. Al-Mawwaq said in his *Sunan al-Muhtadeen*: "In the search for knowledge do not let the saying that 'knowledge, if unaccompanied by fear, becomes a punishment for the one who has acquired it' of Taj ad-Deen or the like in *al-Ihya'* make you give up. This is not how things are. In this instance, the *'ulama* say that it is confusing the beginning with the end. Whoever confuses the beginning with the end, then his path is closer to going astray than being guided. Thus I say: his saying 'If fear accompanies it, then…' is said with respect to someone who does not make it a means [to earn or worldly advancement] in itself and it refers to the *sabiqun* (forerunners). Others, however, like someone who a *muqtasid* (that is someone who strives to do what is right and is moderate in action but who through circumstances beyond his control is compelled to use his knowledge of the deen for worldly purposes) or someone who is clearly doing an injustice to his self (*dhalim linafsihi*) without rendering his actions invalid (*idh lam takun fihi jurha*), that is – for such persons, then, the knowledge they have is a mercy. Even if he has no fear, an *'alim* who just possesses knowledge is not equal to someone who has no knowledge." Then he transmits what al-Qarafi said above and goes on to say:

"What is clear from *fiqh* is that artisanal work, trade, and occupying oneself with knowledge beyond what is *fard al-'ayn* (obligatory on oneself alone), and knowledge of medicine are all (valid) means [of livelihood] (*asbab*) within the *shari'ah*. Thus whoever occupies himself with any of these things without intention, then he is doing an injustice to himself; and if he does something without understanding (*la dark 'alayhi*) then he will have lost the reward; if he does occupy himself with one of these things intending however to abstain from (begging) then he is a *muqtasid*. Ibn 'Arafa said: "Whoever is unable to provide for himself and for his family except by the provision afforded by his taking on the post of a judge, then he should strive to gain this post." It has

been related from Ibn Yunus: "Someone ought not to make the hajj for another, but if it should occur then the payment (agreed upon) should be made." 'Abd al-Wahhab said: "This is by analogy with being paid for being a judge."

Al-Mawwaq has also said on another occasion: "The *muqtasid* is he who considers it [knowledge] a means to acquiring the *dunya*. One man says: 'It is the best of means while another says: 'I prefer seeking the *dunya* with a drum and a flute than seeking after it by means of knowledge and the deen.'"

Our Shaykh, the verifier of knowledge, said in his commentary on *al-Hikam*: "Al-Mawwaq's words are valid, especially in this time when knowledge has become a strange thing and its people rare, and when people have almost come to differ on the '*dharuriyat*' (the indispensable, necessary aspects of the deen). The study of knowledge is the most important of matters and striving to teach and acquire it is the greatest of acts of worship. Even if fear (*khashya*) may not come easily to the one studying, it may well be that the foundations of iman and islam are preserved in him and the deen is established in him – for knowledge of the manner in which the Lord of the worlds is to be worshipped is secured by means of the very existence of the people of knowledge amongst the multitude of Muslims." Then he transmitted *hadith* and sayings of the imams which support what he had discussed, namely that occupying oneself with knowledge – teaching and acquiring it – is better than occupying oneself with any other recommended good act, be it fasting, *salat*, glorification and other acts of obedience. He said: "and the saying of al-Mawwaq 'a means to the *dunya*' refers to (something in) the *dunya* which is needed and which is halal, for example, when, he speaks of the person who seeks after the post of judge in order to provide for himself and his family." Here end the words of Jussous.

Then after speaking at length he also says: "Know that, whatever the circumstances, occupying oneself with knowledge is better then being idle or being ignorant. This is, because of the greater number of calamities which occur through lack of knowledge than those occurring when knowledge is present. The person who is ignorant cannot perceive truths and realities as long as he himself is caught up in misdeeds and is unaware of his being submerged in worldly affairs. Indeed, he considers acts of disobedience to be acts of obedience and in believing so confuses *mubahat* (acts which are merely licit) or *qurubat* (acts which bring him close to Allah) with such acts of disobedience. This is a great disaster which leads to the ruin of this world and the next: it causes the door of *tawba* to be closed for the person of this description – as, in his view, what he is doing is not an offence. This applies to the person who does not occupy himself with knowledges, especially the knowledge of *tasawwuf*

– a necessary quality and attribute which must be embedded and fixed in a person on account of the *nafs*' trickery, its deception of the *'alim* who acts upon his knowledge and its ability to make flawed action look perfectly sound and correct. The saying of Shaykh Abu'l-Hasan has already been mentioned: "Whoever does not strive to acquire a profound knowledge of our sciences dies persisting in committing major wrong actions even though he is unaware of it." Our Shaykh has expressed this same meaning in the commentary on *an-Naseeha*.

He has also said in his commentary on *al-Hikam*: "Everything the Shaykhs have mentioned regarding the prohibition of studying this knowledge with a corrupt intention and regarding their warning against it does not mean that they want people to abandon this study and to turn their backs on it. How could this be when it is required both of the individual person and of the community in general? Rather, they intend it is as admonition to awaken people so that they might purify their intention for study and strive to obtain sincerity. If they did not mean this it would lead to people leaving off this study but this would be absolute ignorance and the root of corruption. Rather, obtaining sincerity is by means of the study of the above mentioned masters, by reading their works, by examining the hadith and traditions which inspire one to avoid acts of showing off, of pride, or being content with the *nafs*, or vying with each other in this world. It encourages instead desire for the opposite of this and keeping the company of the people of good actions and the deen. All these things help one in attaining an intention and purifying it." Then he mentions narrations and sayings which testify to what the Shaykhs actually mean, namely awakening the desire to correct one's action not to abandon it. Here ends the saying of Jussous.

What he meant by his Shaykh the verifier of knowledge was Ibn Zakari, and what he mentioned of his words: "There is no doubt that there is no good in knowledge which is entirely unaccompanied by fear" to his words: "what knowledge belongs to an *'alim* who is content with his *nafs*?" has been transmitted word for word by Abu'l-Qasim ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Qadir al-Fasi in the commentary on *The Aqida* of his grandfather 'Abd al-Qadir. His saying that "occupying oneself with knowledge is better than ignorance whatever the circumstances ..." is like what Zarruq said, may Allah grant us benefit by him – and I think it is in the book *An-Nush al-Anfa'*: "The disobedient *'alim* is better than the ignorant worshipper." It has also been transmitted that: "Sleeping based on knowledge is better than worship based on ignorance."

The benefit of this is contained in what Bashir ibn al-Harith, may Allah be pleased with him, said in *Majma' al-Ahbab*, may He make us die upon love of our Master Muhammad, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and then love of him: "The likeness of those who consume the *dunya* by means of the deen is the likeness of those who try to wash their hands of a putrid smell using fish." Ibrahim al-Harbi said: "My father took me to Bashir ibn al-Harith saying: 'This son of mine likes to write down hadith and knowledge.' Then Bashir said to me: 'Son, one ought to act upon this knowledge, but if you do not act upon all of it, then for every two hundred hadith (act upon) five of them, as one does with dirhams[1].' Then my father said to him: 'Abu Nasr make a *du'a* for him' and he replied: 'Your *du'a* is more likely to be answered than mine. The *du'a* of the father for his son is like the *du'a* of the Prophet for his *umma*.'" Here ends the text from *Majma' al-Ahbab*.

Jussous said: "Know that seeking knowledge is an action which is exposed to health and sickness. People who seek after it are in ranks and some are higher than others, just as in any other action. Thus there are those who seek after it purely for their *akhira* and those who seek after it purely for their *dunya* and between these two there are ranks. This can be ascertained by examining what has been discussed above. The highest rank is seeking after it for the sake of Allah, no other." Shaykh Ibn 'Abbad said: "And the soundness of his intention in this matter is that his aim is to seek the pleasure of Allah, to put it to use for the benefit of those around him and to prefer leaving the darkness of ignorance for the light of knowledge – such an intention is sound: its outcome, manifest in the next world, is praiseworthy and, through obedience to Allah, its fruits are harvested in this world. The Messenger of Allah, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: 'There is no blessing for me in the rising of the sun on any day in which I do not obtain an increase in knowledge which brings me closer to Allah, exalted is He.' Sufyan ath-Thawri said, may Allah be pleased with him, 'Knowledge is acquired in order to have *taqwa* of Allah and knowledge is superior to other things because by it one has *taqwa* of Allah.' If this aim is flawed and the intention of the student is corrupted such that he deliberately intends thereby to obtain some of the *dunya*, be it wealth or position, then his reward is annulled, his action is rendered useless and he is reduced to clear loss. Allah, exalted is He, said: '*If anyone desires to cultivate the akhira, we will increase him in his cultivation*.'"[2]

He has also said in *Tanbih al-Ghafil*: "The person seeking knowledge ought

1 For every 200 dirhams one gives away 5 in *zakat*. Translator.

2 ash-Shura – Counsel: 18.

to desire the pleasure of Allah, exalted is He, and desire the abode of the *akhira*, the ridding himself and others of ignorance, reviving the deen and the preservation of Islam – for surely its preservation is by means of knowledge, by means of gratitude for the blessing of the intellect and by means of the health of the body."

Know that the sure sign which bears witness to the soundness of a person's claim to be teaching and acquiring knowledge for the sake of Allah is that he measures the arrival of death in terms of the importance of this knowledge – if he is happy to be occupied with knowledge at this moment, then he is on the right path and if not, then he is on the wrong path.

He said in the *Lata'if al-Minan*: "During a conversation between myself and someone who was preoccupied with knowledge – on the subject of the necessity of having a sincere intention in it and of not occupying oneself with it other than for the sake of Allah – I said: 'The one who studies knowledge for the sake of Allah is the one who if you said to him "tomorrow you will die" he would not put down his book.'"

Sayyidi ibn 'Abbad said: "This is a clear statement and utterly correct: one cannot imagine other than right action from a slave in this state – one who is freed from the flaws of showing off, who has left his portion of the *nafs* and the pursuing of desires. This is what is required of the slave." Here ends the text of Jussous. Then he says after a while: "He is referring, in what he says, to people seeking after knowledge who are of the highest rank."

Al-Mawwaq said in the *Sunan al-Muhtadeen*: "It is clear that the *'alim* is one of the forerunners in his relation (to the deen) is the one of whom they have said: 'He is the one who if you said to him "tomorrow you will die", then he would not lay down his book. As for the one who is *muqtasid* (who strives to do what is right and is moderate in action), who consider it a means to (obtaining something of) the *dunya* …" – to the end of what he says above. Here ends the text of Jussous.

In Abu Mutafannin's commentary on Muslim with respect to the hadith about the three (types of persons) who will be the first to burn in the Fire – "'…but you acquired knowledge and taught it and studied the Qur'an in order that it be said: "He is a reciter" and indeed it has been said.' Then the order is given concerning this person and he is dragged on his face until he is thrown in the Fire" – he says: 'There is no meaning to "in order that it be said" unless one understands that what the person intends thereby is boasting and showing off.' Al-Qarafi said: 'The recitation aloud (of the sincere person) is not done in order to become famous – but he may well be celebrated in order that

people should not shrink from learning from him.' 'Izz ad-Deen said: '(The sincere reciter) is rewarded for his recitation aloud' and our Shaykh (that is Ibn 'Arafa) used to say: 'He liked to recite aloud and this is not reprehensible: it is not unlikely that he will be rewarded for this as it is way of honouring and attaching importance to a quality of perfection.' He said: 'This recitation aloud is done in order to free himself of ignorance and is one of the (various ways of) recitation performed out of love for Allah.'

In refutation of as-Safadi when he says "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah…" there is: "There is no difference of opinion that knowledge ennobles. Whoever says 'There is no superiority of the *'alim* over the ignorant person' is put to death as he has violated the consensus (*ijma'*) and has denied the Qur'an and sunna. If one asks whether the father may say to the child: 'Study in order to become superior to your peers'? then the reply would be that it is permitted. However when he grows up, he should change his intention. As for the person who is already grown up, however, this is not permitted for him. Rather, he should study knowledge on condition that he become free of ignorance, that he revive the sunna of the Prophet, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, that he teach it to people and act upon it.' Ibn al-Faris said: 'It is permitted to study knowledge in order to exalt oneself over others.' Ibn al-'Arabi said: 'It is permitted for him to study in order that he may be exempted from taking office (*wadha'if*).'

Jussous said: 'Al-Qalshani said in his commentary on his words in the *Risala*: "Knowledge guides to good things, and leads to them" – "this is an indication that man is required to strive in his seeking after knowledge even if he has not made the best of intentions – for knowledge will draw him to the good." It has been narrated from one of the earlier men of knowledge: "We sought knowledge for other than the sake of Allah and it drove us back to Allah" – that is it showed us the excellence of correcting one's intention, the punishment awaiting the one who corrupts his intention and the greatness and majesty of having knowledge as one's goal.'"

Ad-Darimi has related from al-Hasan: "Some people sought after knowledge not wanting it for the sake of Allah and what is with Him – then this knowledge stayed with them until they wanted it for the sake of Allah and what is with Him." It is also narrated that Mujahid said: "We sought this knowledge without having a strong intention in it, but then Allah granted us this intention afterwards." Al-Hasan said: "We used to seek after knowledge for the *dunya* but this drew us to the next world" and Sufyan ath-Thawri said it, may Allah be pleased with him. Al-Baji said, however, in *Sunan as-Saliheen* in the chapter on

knowledge: "Know that the knowledge indicated by Sufyan ibn 'Uyayna with his words 'We sought to acquire knowledge for other than the sake of Allah …' refers to knowledge of hadith, *tafsir* and the biographies of the Prophets and the *Salihun* – for such knowledge contains teachings which invoke fear and serve as a warning. Such knowledge causes one to realise the importance of fear of Allah, exalted is He, and even if it does not have an immediate effect it will have an effect on his end in life. As for *kalam* and legal discussion merely connected with *fatwas* based on the commercial and social aspects of the deen (*mu'amalat*) and the settling of disputes, such things only increase one's desire for the *dunya* and only increase covetousness until the end of one's days.' Then he said: 'Look to the final actions of many of the *fuqaha* who sought to acquire knowledge for other than Allah take admonition from them. They died and they were doomed in their search for the *dunya*, snarling at each other like dogs. And news (of something) is not the same as direct experience (of this thing).'" Jussous

He also said: "Sayyidi ibn 'Abbad, may Allah be pleased with him, said in the commentary on the *Hikam*: 'The teacher should examine the state of the person acquiring knowledge from him. He should only give of his knowledge to someone who has the signs of goodness and correctness, for it is by means of them that his intention and goal will be upright. He should not give of his knowledge to someone else whose state and ignorance are well known.' Then he said: 'And the words of Allah, exalted is He "*Do not hand over to the simple-minded any property of theirs*"[1] draw attention to the fact that it is more appropriate to preserve knowledge from someone who might corrupt it and blether about it – as has been expressed in the following verse:

Whoever gives the ignorant knowledge has squandered it
and whoever prevents someone capable of understanding it from obtaining it has acted unjustly

"It has been related from some of the earlier nations that they would first test the behaviour of the person seeking to acquire knowledge: if they found that it was low and mean, they would use every means to prevent him from acquiring knowledge. They would say: 'Knowledge would help him to further contemptible behaviour. Thus knowledge, in his case, would become an evil instrument.'

"Wise men (*hukama'*) have said: 'A lot of knowledge in an evil man is like a lot of water in the roots of the colocynth – the more you water it, the more bitter it becomes. This is something which is tried and tested by experience.'

1 An-Nisa' – Women: 5

Then he said: 'One of them said: "I saw Sufyan ath-Thawri in a sad state. I asked him about it and he replied in irritation: 'We have become nothing but a shop for the sons of this world.' I asked: 'And how is that?' 'One of them keeps our company until he becomes acquainted with us and takes the wages of a worker, a door-keeper, a chamberlain or a tax collector by saying "Sufyan ath-Thawri has related to us."' Then he, may Allah, exalted is He, have mercy on him, mentioned in his teaching the causes of corruption which especially affect such people, and further causes of corruption which spread from them to others. Of the former there is the intensification of their despicable qualities because they are aware that all their worldly desires, without exception, may be obtained by the knowledge they possess.

"Thus their *nafs* become so exited that the effect of this is visible in their outward appearance because of their vying with each other like dogs after the *dunya* and their having recourse to those of its children who have it living in ease and comfort, seeking thereby their favour, and use every trick to make sure that such people respond to them. In doing so, they inevitably take on ostentatious and affected behaviour, hypocrisy, flattery and other forms of disobedience, and all kinds of servile and humiliating actions. One of the acknowledged causes of corruption is their deceiving ignorant persons who see how they have obtained all they desire of the world and they imagine that they have obtained the honour of the next world by the help they have given others and the profit they themselves have derived. This causes them to imitate them and so they fall victim to what those they imitate have fallen victim to; or it leads them to have love for them and to consider their states commendable. This, in turn, causes a hidden illness in them, namely, their imperceptibly taking on the vileness of character of these ignorant people. Thus the purpose for which the Messengers were sent is lost for them, that is, encouragement of *zuhd* in this world and of desire for the next world, of love for poverty and destitution, of preferring humility and going low, and of taking on the characteristics of Iman and Islam, and their intense warnings against committing anything which is forbidden or evil. This, then, causes them to commit hidden and open *shirk*, and evil deceit takes hold of them. This curse may be attributed to the teacher who facilitated the causes of what happened." Here ends the section and some parts have been omitted – he spent a long time discussing the *nafs*, so examine it further." Jussous

Ibn Zakari has transmitted something similar or even more forceful in *Sharh an-Nasiha* from al-Ghazali, may Allah grant us benefit by them all and there is no power and no strength except by Allah, the Sublime, the Vast.

In *Tanbih al-Ghafil* Jussous has transmitted the following text from al-Fakihani in *Sharh ar-Risala* which contradicts this: "It is not fitting for the *'alim* that he refuse to teach anyone just because he does not have the correct intention – for it is hoped that he will acquire a good intention. Often it is difficult for many beginners to concern themselves with correcting their intention because of the weakness of their *nafs* and their lack of familiarity with what is needed to correct their intention. Refusing to teach them leads to the loss of a great deal of knowledge; although – by the very blessed nature of knowledge – it is to be hoped that one purifies one's intention if one has an intimate relationship to knowledge, and they have said: 'We sought knowledge for other than Allah but it refused to belong to other than Allah' – meaning that in the end the intention (of even the person without a correct intention) comes to be for Allah."

Our Shaykh the verifier of knowledge said in *Sharh al-Hikam*: "What they mean – and Allah knows best – when they say that the teacher should not dispense his knowledge except to good and correct people is that when it is known that someone's intention is corrupt, that his very being is depraved, that his heart has become hardened, that counsel would be of no avail and that reminding him would be of no use, then one must keep one's distance, avoid him and withhold one's knowledge from him whoever he may be because it would only increase his evil if the possibility presented itself to him – without there being any specific cause of corruption. If, however, this is not the case then they have stated that one should not refuse to teach a student just because his intention is not sincere." Then he has transmitted from *Sharh al-Muhadhdhab* what has been mentioned above from al-Fakihani, and Allah, exalted is He is the one who gives success.

I say: "And this is what may be understood from the saying of the author: 'Knowledge is a guide to good things, a pointer to them.' Allah, exalted is He, said: "*Remind, then, if the reminder benefits*"[1], that is, the admonition is for the *muminun* and not the *kafirun*. This is like His saying: "*So remind, with the Qur'an, whoever fears My threat*"[2] Here end the words of Jussous.

I say: "Ash-Sha'rani says the following: 'It is part of their character that if they come to know from some evidence about a lack of sincerity on the part of those seeking to acquire knowledge from them, then they carry on with the instruction but turn to Allah, exalted is He, making *du'a* that the intention of the person concerned become sincere. In this way, both they and the person in question receive a reward. They do not abandon instructing the person – for this would be ignorance on their part with respect to what the Legislator

1 al-A'la – The Most High: 9

2 Qaf: 45

intended, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. Knowledge is only obtained for two reasons: in order to act by it and in order to revive the *shari'ah* by means of it. So the person of knowledge is rewarded whatever happens – be it with a partial or a full reward."

Sayyidi 'Ali al-Khawwas, may Allah be content with him, used to say: "There is no one who possesses knowledge but that he acts upon it – even if only with respect to himself when he commits acts of disobedience and then turns in *tawba* and regrets his action – for if it were not for his knowledge of the judgement, he would not have been guided to the awareness that the action was wrong and he would not have turned in *tawba* away from it, for if it had not been because of his knowledge of the legal considerations he would not have been guided to the fact that it was a wrong action, even if the one who does disobey has not acted by his knowledge according to the technical usage of the term – so understand this. So knowledge is of benefit to the one who possesses it whatever the circumstances, and the knowledge of each person is always more than his action – in every age. And praise belongs to Allah for Iman and Islam." Here ends the text taken from *Tanbeeh al-Mughtarreen*.

The first benefit: In *Kifayat al-Muhtaj*, in the section on the biography of ash-Shareef at-Tilimsani, he says: "In his time, students were the most noble of people and those with the most abundant provision. No others excelled them or equalled them in rank. Their words were understood in the best possible light. They were all left to study those knowledges which interested them and all knowledge was regarded as a source of ultimate happiness. They used to say: 'Whoever is granted knowledge in one domain, then he should keep to it.'"

Then he said: "The *'ulama* would not dispute in their gatherings, they would not accuse others of mistakes, they would not seek to dominate for the sake of their *nafs*, they would respond to the one who envied them their knowledge in the most polite and fitting manner and they would persist in reading a *hizb* (of the Qur'an)."

On another occasion he related from Ibn Marzuq that according to the consensus of the *'ulama* – amongst them Ibn 'Arafa – ash-Shareef at-Tilimsani was the most knowledgeable of the people of his time.

2. The author of the book *an-Nurayn* mentioned that "Everyone is either in the Garden or the Fire except for the people of the *A'raf* – the wall separating the two –who are: the *'alim* who did not act according to his knowledge, the illegitimate child and someone who goes on a military expedition (*ghazwa*) without the permission of his parents." The quotation ends here and the responsibility is his.

3. Muhammad ibn al-Hasan, the author of *Majma‘ al-Ahbab* relates: “A man laughed in the gathering of ‘Abd ar-Rahman ibn Mahdi. On hearing him he said: ‘Who is laughing?’ And he repeated his question several times until some of those present pointed a man out. He went up to him saying: ‘You seek knowledge and you are laughing? I shall not narrate to you for two months.’ Then the people got up and left.”

4. The following has been recorded in *Sahih Muslim*: “Whoever removes one of the afflictions of this world from a *mumin*, then Allah will remove for him one of the afflictions of the Day of Rising, and whoever makes it easy for someone in difficulty, then Allah will make it easy for him in this world and the next, and whoever shields a Muslim then Allah will shield him in this world and the next and Allah, exalted is He, will assist the slave as long as the slave assists his brother. Whoever takes a path seeking thereby knowledge, then Allah will make the path to the Garden easy for him” – in the form narrated by an-Nawawi in his *Sharh al-Arba‘in*, or in whatever its wording is.

I say: “It has been narrated in al-Bukhari that the Messenger of Allah, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: ‘A Muslim is a brother to a Muslim, so he should neither oppress him nor surrender him to oppression. Whoever fulfils the needs of his brother, Allah will fulfil his needs and whoever alleviates an affliction from a Muslim Allah will alleviate an affliction of his on the day of Rising and whoever shields a Muslim Allah will shield him on the Day of Rising.” Or however its wording is.

Ibn Hajar al-Haytami said in the *Sharh al-Arba‘in* – with respect to his words “Whoever removes one of the afflictions of this world from a *mumin*” – “the *mumin* takes preference because of his nobility and inviolability and the reward for whatever good treatment he shows him. If this were not the case (and there were no distinctions), the *dhimmi* would be the same – here and in the following – if we understand the (general) nature of the reward as mentioned in the tradition quoted above (in the *Arba‘in* of an-Nawawi), namely that: ‘Allah has prescribed good treatment for everything’ and in the tradition ‘In every hot liver there is a reward.’ (However, in terms of rank), a *dhimmi* granted safety (*adh-dhimmi al-musta’min*) comes after a *mumin*, and a non-Muslim from a people at war with the Muslims (*harbi*) comes after this. The reward for (helping) each of the above declines the more (their varying degrees of) nobility and respect decrease.”

He also said with respect to his words “whoever makes it easy for someone in difficulty…” that “these words may be correctly taken to comprise referring to solving a question of law for a common person regarding some predicament

he may have fallen into." He also said with respect to his saying "and whoever takes a path seeking thereby knowledge" – [meaning, knowledge] of the *shari'ah* or one of its instruments (like *tafsir*) intending thereby the face of Allah, exalted is He, that others said: "Even if this is a condition for every act of worship, the practice of the *'ulama* is to stipulate this specifically regarding the matter (of seeking knowledge) because some people are very lax in this respect or are negligent." Here ends the text. It is as if what he means is that ostentatious behaviour affects knowledge more than it effects other acts of worship so special notice of the necessity of sincerity is needed – sincerity in being meticulous when dealing with the *shari'ah* and the methods and instruments used in understanding the law, for example *tafsir*, hadith, *fiqh*. As for logic, which is used by people today, it is useful and not prohibited – from one point of view. What is prohibited are the philosophical aspects opposed to the *shari'ah* which used to be mixed up with it."

With respect to the words "Allah will make a path to the Garden easy for him", means that his seeking and acquisition of knowledge direct him towards seeking guidance and obedience which will take him to the Garden; but this is only possible when Allah, exalted is He, makes this easy for him for without His kindness and His granting of success neither knowledge or anything else will be of use. Or it means that He will reward his seeking and his acquisition of knowledge by making it easy for him to enter the Garden such that he will not experience any of the difficulties when standing (before Allah on the Day of Judgement) which others will experience – and this latter meaning is closer to the literal meaning of the hadith." Here end his words.

O Allah shield us by our Master Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, may the peace and blessing of Allah be upon him, from the difficulties of this standing (before Allah).

Salat an-Nabi – Asking for blessings on the Prophet

صَلَّى وَسَلَّمَ عَلَى مُحَمَّدِ

وَآلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَالْمُقْتَدِي

3 Then blessings and peace on Muhammad, his Family, Companions and those who follow his example

Mayyara has explained this formula in *Sharh al-Wadhifa* with reference to our saying 'O Allah bless Muhammad' saying it means 'honour Muhammad' and

this means – in this world – exalt his fame, manifest his deen , establish his *shari'ah* and – with respect to the next world – make his reward profuse and abundant, appoint him intercessor for his *umma* and increase his excellence in the Praiseworthy Station (Maqam al-Mahmud). What is meant by the words of, exalted is He, "*Bless him*"[1] is, "Call on your Lord for blessings [for him]."

He said in *Nur al-Basar*: "*Salat* – blessings – from Allah are *in'am* – the granting of favour and grace. From the slave, *salat* is his requesting that from Allah, whether it is for the Prophet or someone else, whether it issues from an angel or someone else, and everything they mentioned about it is based on what I have mentioned – so take notice. And *salam* – peace – from Allah, exalted is He, is His granting safety from what is hateful (to Allah), and from the slave, it is his requesting this from Him, glorious is He."

Useful point: Al-Aqdamisi said in the commentary on *al-Idha'a* when going into the legal judgement regarding *salat* – blessings – on the Prophet, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him: "As for when it is forbidden, it is when impurities are present along with the intention of belittling him, since that is one of the prohibited actions which renders the person guilty of *kufr*, may Allah grant us refuge from this by the rank of Muhammad, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him" Here end the words of Al-Aqdamisi. Al-Khurshi was his Shaykh and the Shaykh of an-Nafarawi.

In the *Mi'yar* of the *'alim* of the Maghrib Muhammad ibn Marzooq during his discussion – to come – insha'Allah, exalted is He, – of the statement of the author [Ibn 'Ashir]: "… and the use of stones to wipe oneself [after defecating or urinating] is permitted" … "and for this reason *dhikr* is permitted in a place which is not clean, but it is not permitted to call for blessings on the Prophet, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him."

In the commentary on *Al-Hisn al-Hasin* of Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Qadir al-Fasi it says: "As-Sanusi was asked about calling for blessings on the Prophet, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, in an unclean bed and he replied that there is no harm in this if the place for the head is clean."

The first benefit: Ibn al-Hattab said that ibn Naji said in the commentary on the *Mudawwana*: "One of them made a *fatwa* saying that books of hadith which do not contain the words of *salat* on the Prophet, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, are to be rejected." As-Sakhawi has mentioned that "a copyist of the *at-Tamheed* of Ibn 'Abd al-Barr deliberately omitted the *salat* on the Prophet, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, whenever his name was mentioned and this greatly reduced the value of it, and he sold it very

1 al-Ahzab – The Confederates: 56

cheaply. Moreover, Allah did not honour the work of the copyist with esteem and acceptance after his death despite his knowing one section of knowledge well."

Issue

Al-Qadi Abu Bakr ibn al-'Arabi said an extraordinary thing in *al-'Arida*: "What I believe is that his saying, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him 'Whoever calls for blessings on me, then Allah will bless him ten times' does not simply refer to the person who says 'The Messenger of Allah, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was …' but rather these blessings are for the person who calls for blessings on him in a manner which is well known and which we have stated explicitly." As-Sakhawi mentioned many dreams which indicate how great a reward is to be gained from making this *dhikr*.'" Here end the words of Ibn al-Hattab.

2. I have seen a text of one of the people of knowledge which reads: "What is the point of worship by means of invocations without knowing their meaning – this is ineffectual. The person making *salat* on our Master Muhammad, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and on all the other Prophets of Allah, exalted is He, should have the intention of making a *du'a* for them, and should have as his goal an act of worship, a coming closer to Allah glorious is He, a coming closer to His elevated Majesty."

3. Ash-Sha'rani narrated in *Tabaqat al-Awliya* from one of the people of knowledge: "I saw the Prophet, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and I said: 'Messenger of Allah (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) the ten blessings for whoever calls, just once, for blessings on you, does this refer to someone whose heart is present?' He replied: 'No, it refers to anyone, even a distracted person, who calls for blessings on me and Allah will give him the like of mountains which will make *du'a* and ask forgiveness for him. If his heart is present during his call for blessings then only Allah, exalted is He, knows that.'"

Al-Aqdamisi said: "Know that no invocations are of benefit to the person doing them and they are not accepted of him unless his heart is present – except for the recitation of the Qur'an and making *salat* on the Prophet, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, for these two are accepted without a person's heart being present."

4. He also narrated from one of the *awliya* who are *shareef* in the *Tabaqat*: "I saw the Prophet, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and he said: 'Son, backbiting is haram but if it is not possible to avoid listening to

people's backbiting, then recite sura Ikhlas three times and give the *thawab* (reward) for it to the person being talked about for surely backbiting and the *thawab* will inherit from each other, insha'Allah.'" He also said: "I said on one occasion in a gathering:

Muhammad is human but yet not like a human
Rather he is like a ruby amongst stones.

Then I saw the Prophet, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and he said: 'Allah will forgive you and everyone who recites this on your behalf'" – and he would recite this, may Allah be pleased with him, during every gathering until he died.

5. The author of the *Mukhtasar* of as-Suyuti's *Hawi* said, explaining the hadith: 'There is no one who calls for peace on me but that Allah restores my *ruh* to me so that I may answer with a call for peace on him' – "what is meant by the *ruh* is the mercy for his *umma* which is in his heart, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and the kindness on which he was created, even though he did become angered at times by those whose wrong actions were many and who violated the prohibitions of Allah. *Salat* on the Prophet, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, brings about forgiveness of wrong actions as is narrated in the hadith: '…then your worries will be dispelled and your wrong actions will be forgiven.' Thus the Prophet, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has informed us that there is no one who calls for peace on him – however great his wrong actions may be – but that his mercy (*rahma*) on which he was created returns to him in order that he may answer the call in person – and a person's wrong actions before this do not prevent him from answering the call. This is something of precious benefit and news of great import. The particular emphasis of the phrase "there is no one … but" with its combination of negation and exception, points clearly to an all inclusive statement rather than a general one with a specific, limited meaning." Here ends the statement in *al-Hawi*.

I say: "This is a clear statement, namely, that no single individual from amongst the disobedient calls for peace on the Prophet, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, but that he, on him be peace and blessings, returns this call for peace, and this – by the everlasting life of Allah – is news of great import – as as-Suyuti said. However al-Bayhaqi's explanation in the *Sharh al-Arba'in* stipulates that what is meant here is whoever calls for peace on him at his grave. This interpretation supports al-Aqdamisi who draws attention to the hadith: 'It has been narrated that Jibril, peace be upon him, said to the Prophet, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him: "Muhammad shall

I not give you some good news?" He replied: "What is it, my beloved Jibril?" He said: "Every action undertaken by the son of Adam and everything he says is suspended between acceptance and non-acceptance, except for the calling of blessings on you, for this is accepted without condition from everyone." The *'ulama* have gone very far with this matter, even as far as saying: "It is accepted of the thief and the disobedient person even if they are in the middle of committing their deeds." If you have understood that, then know, too, that our calling for blessings on him, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is meant in two ways, one way regarding the relation between the slave who calls for blessings and his Lord, and one between the Prophet, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and his Lord because when the slave says: 'O Allah bless him' once, then Allah blesses him ten times, as is narrated: "That when he slave asks for blessings for him once, then Allah blesses him ten times, and when he asks for blessings for him ten times, He blesses him one hundred times," as has been reported in the hadith. Know, too, that the slave's calling for blessings on the Prophet, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is an act of worship because it is obedience to the words of Allah, exalted is He: '*You who have* iman*! call down blessings on him and ask for complete peace and safety for him*.'[1] Know, too, that the *'ulama* have differed as to the opinion of the earlier generations with respect to whether it is accepted of the disobedient person even if he is in the middle of acting disobediently. Some of them said that the two intentions (referred to above) are accepted of such a person, while others have said that what is accepted in this case is rather in the sense of the relation between the Prophet, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and his Lord. As for it referring to the relation between the slave and his Lord, this is subject to the same conditions as any other *du'a*. However, one ought to trust in the reality of the first way as the overflowing generosity of Allah, exalted is He, and the excellence of our Prophet, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, are more worthy of this meaning." Here end the words of al-Aqdamisi.

I SAY: "I saw that one of the *Salihun* said that calling for blessings is better for the disobedient than reciting Qur'an. I saw that another said that the person calling for blessings on him, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, cannot be considered to be someone (truly) calling for blessings if he is not following his sunna while the person who is following the sunna may be considered to be someone who is calling for blessings even if he does not ask for blessings. What the person who said this meant is clear."

1 al-Ahzab – The Confederates 56

6. Ibn al-Hattab said that Ahmad Zarruq said that the Prophet's saying, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him: "Whoever calls for blessings on me in a book, then the angels continually call for blessings on him as long as my name remains in that book" refers either to the writing down of the Prophet's name, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and calling for blessings on him – and this is the literal meaning – and the saying of these words out loud – and this is preferred."

I heard one of my Shaykhs stipulate that in order to obtain the reward mentioned, the calling for blessings should be spoken out loud while writing them down, although I have not come across this from anyone other then him. Rather the literal meaning of the hadith and the sayings of the *'ulama* indicate that this is not a condition. Hafidh as-Sakhawi said: "The student should take care to write the formula calling for blessings and peace on the Messenger of Allah, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, every time his name is mentioned – in its full form, not by a mere sign as the lazy do. Moreover one should not tire of repeating it, irrespective of whether it is written in its full and proper form in the original. Whoever neglects to call for blessings and peace upon him, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, will be deprived of a vast blessing. It is narrated of him, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, that he said: 'Whoever calls for blessings on me….' The literal meaning of this is that the above mentioned reward is obtained merely by writing it and that the speaking of it out loud is another (separate) matter, which is recommended."

The Name "Muhammad"

The word "Muhammad" is a sign and mark indicating his noble essence, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. Naming people with this or the name Ahmad contains great benefit. In *al-Jami' as-Saghir* is to be found: "No one amongst you will suffer harm if there is a Muhammad, two Muhammads or three in his household" – or words to this effect.

Al-Munawi said: "In this there is a recommendation to name people after him. Malik said: 'The name Muhammad is not to be found amongst a household but that its blessing increases.' Abu Tahir as-Salafi has narrated from a *marfu'* hadith (with a chain of narration reaching to the Prophet, may the peace and blessings be upon him) of Humayd at-Taweel from Anas: "Two slaves are standing before Allah, exalted is He and Allah says to them both: 'Enter both of you into the Garden for I have made a promise to myself that no one with the name Muhammad or Ahmad will enter the Fire.'"

I say: “One of the people of our time said: ‘Perhaps this refers to someone who names the person out of love for him and for the blessing contained in it from him. This is indicated by what as-Suyuti mentions in *al-Hawi*: Ibn Bakir reported the excellence in the name Muhammad or Ahmad from a hadith of Abu Umama: “Whoever has a new born child and calls him Muhammad out of love for me and for the blessing in my name then he and his child will be in the Garden” – or words to this effect. He said: ‘In my view the chain of narration is the rank of *hasan* (good).’” I say that the meaning of “reported” is “narrated.”

Al-Bayjuri said in explanation of the hadith: “The Prophet, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would take off his ring before going to the toilet” that it indicates that entering the toilet with something on which a noble name has been engraved is disliked lest it become contaminated – although it has also been said that it is forbidden. If a noble name like Muhammad has been engraved on it – and nobility and glory in the name are intended – then it is disliked to take it with one into the toilet. This is the opinion preferred by Ibn Jama‘a. If, however, he does not have in mind this meaning but rather merely the name of his friend, then it is not disliked.” This for me indicates the above mentioned restriction. What is also an indication of this is that we have seen many naming their children Muhammad and they have only been involved in mischief throughout their lives. This is because they did not name their sons seeking his blessing, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, but rather they named him after their father or brother or someone else whom they held to be important.”

The author of *as-Sira al-Halabiya* said: “Whoever wants their wife to bear a male child should lay their hand on her belly and say: ‘If this child is born a male, then I name him Muhammad’ – and he will be born a male. It has also been narrated from ‘Ata’: ‘No child still in the womb of its mother is named Muhammad but that he will be a boy.’ It is narrated from al-Husayn ibn ‘Ali, may Allah be pleased with them both: ‘Whoever is expecting a child and intends to call it Muhammad, then Allah will turn it into a male child even if it is a female.’ One of the narrators of this hadith added: ‘Then I made the intention to do this and I was blessed with seven children all of whom I named Muhammad.’”

It is reported from Ibn Abi Hamza, may Allah, exalted is He, grant us benefit by him, and others like him: “His allowing, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, to call people by his name, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is because of the good and benefit in it: he has reminded

us that if on the Day of Rising the name 'Muhammad!' is called out then those who hear this and raise their heads in response will have success and happiness and there are many narrations to this effect."

"I have seen one of the people of *baraka* who had mastered a portion of the language of knowledge and he had a number of children all of whom he named Muhammad – only differentiating them with honorifics – because of the good he had heard which, in general, comes with this blessed name and, in particular, to the person who names his child by this name. For this reason, I never saw him and them but that they were enjoying great good – and although he was a poor man and had a large family he did not have to rely on anyone or have to leave any part of the deen which was of particular importance to him." The end of his words.

His Family

The word "Family" in his saying "And on his Family and Companions…" refers to his relations who were *muminun* from amongst Bani Hashim. The "Companions" refer to those of the *muminun* who were with him, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him – even if they did not narrate – and even if only for a very short time, and who died in this state.

The first benefit: He said in the *Sharh al-Wadhifa* that the commentator on the *Dala'il al-Khayrat* said: "There are many narrations regarding the excellence of the progeny of the Prophet, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and that they will be the lords of the people of the Garden, that they will be in its highest abode, that every single one of them possesses the power of intercession and that Allah, exalted is He, promised him that none of them will enter the Fire."

2. Al-Munawi said in his *Kabeer* in commentary on the *Jami'*, regarding his saying "I asked my Lord that I would not marry into a family of my *umma* and that no one from my *umma* would marry into my family except that they would be with me in the Garden and He granted me this" – or words to this effect: "The literal meaning of this is that it includes whoever gets married to or marries (one of his children) to one of his progeny, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. This is indeed good news of great import for whoever becomes related by marriage to a *shareef* who is a man or woman from the Prophet's family, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him."

3. I asked the *'alim*, the *salih*, the seeker of knowledge, Ahmad ibn Atweer al-Jinna, as to who was the most noble of the *shareefs* of our land and he replied: "The family of Mawlayi az-Zayn" and he related a story which had happened

to him concerning this family: he gave one of them presents and the people imitated him by also giving him presents. Then a child whom he loved was afflicted by something painful in his throat and the following came to him:

The love of Muhammad protects us from ruin and calamity …

He interpreted this as proof that he loved the Prophet, may the peace and blessings be upon him, that the nobility of Mawlayi as-Zayn's family was genuine and that Allah, exalted is He, would remove the misfortune that had befallen him. Indeed, by the overflowing generosity of Allah, exalted is He, He removed this affliction from the child by the *baraka* of Muhammad, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

In the commentary of Abu'l-Qasim ibn Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Qadir al-Fasi on the *Aqida* composed by his grandfather 'Abd al-Qadir it reads: "Al-Maqrizi has related from one of the *'ulama* that he harboured a hatred for some of the *shareefs* of Madina because of some innovations they were making a show of. Then he saw Mustafa, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, in a dream and he berated him. He said: 'O Messenger of Allah (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) I seek protection from Allah for disliking them – but I only dislike their harsh treatment of the people of the sunna' He replied: 'A legal question: is not the disobedient son still related to the family (despite his disobedience)? – they are like the disobedient son.'"

Ibn Zakari said in the *Sharh an-Naseeha*: "And in the *Mukhtasar al-Futuhat* there is: 'A man from Makka who we regard as reliable informed us that he strongly disliked what the *shareefs* used to do with the people in Makka and then he saw Fatima, may Allah be content with her, in a dream. She was facing away from him. He greeted her and asked her why she was facing away from him and she told him: 'You are attacking the *shareefs.'* He said, 'I replied to her: "Have you not seen what they are doing with the people?" She replied: "Are they not my children?" I replied: "I turn in *tawba* from this moment on"' and then she turned to face him."

The Poem's Subject Matter

وَبَعْدُ فَالْعَوْنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْمَجِيدْ

فِي نَظْمِ أَبْيَاتٍ لِلأُمِّيِّ تُفِيدْ

4 And then, help is from Allah, the Glorious, in the composition of verses which will be of benefit to the unlettered person…

فِي عَقْدِ الأَشْعَرِي وفِقْهِ مَالِكْ
وَفِي طَرِيقَةِ الْجُنَيْدِ السَّالِكْ

5 …on the subject of the *'aqida* of al-Ash'ari, the *fiqh* of Malik and the *tariqa* of al-Junayd, the wayfarer.

"And then" the preceding lines praising Allah and calling for blessings on His Messenger, or "after" this introductory passage, and since this extra material is implicit because of the evidence of what he mentioned beforehand, then he omitted it here in order to be brief. He ended the word "then" with a *u* because of having cut off the genitive relation textually along with his intending it in the meaning.

Thus he says the word *'awn* – help from Allah – which refers to His enabling or strengthening a person to master a subject; then *al-Majid* – the Glorious – is the One Who has the furthest limit of nobility, the perfection of kingship, and His expansiveness to a degree beyond which nothing more is possible nor is it possible to reach anything of it.

Then he uses the words *fi nadhm* – meaning (this help has been given) "in the composition" – instead of *'ala nadhm* which would be the normal prepositional form in Arabic here. The word *nadhm* is in the plural and it refers to the arranging of the jewels on a necklace to achieve the most beautiful effect. When used as a linguistic term it refers to a harmonious phrase, written in a metre which seeks to combine meaning and rhyme. The word *ummi* – unlettered – refers linguistically to the female slave (of Allah) whose status when born is that of her mother's, and who is unable to read or write.

As for his saying *fi 'aqd al-Ash'ari* – the *'aqida* of al-Ash'ari – this use of the shorter word *'aqd* rather than the more usual form (*'aqida*) is necessary here to permit the ordered metre of the couplet; yet at the same time the formation of a proper meaningful phrase is assured. Al-Ash'ari is mentioned as he formulated the science of *'aqida* – see his biography in *al-Madarik* if you wish.

His mention of *wa fiqh Malik* – regarding the *fiqh* of Malik – refers to what the latter said, or to what those of his followers said or to what the trustworthy men of knowledge after them said who were well versed in Malik's foundations and methods. See the biography of our Imam Malik in Ahmad al-Mayyara's work or in *al-Madarik*.

As for al-Junayd, may Allah be content with him, he is the famous imam, the Master of the Sufis who died, may Allah benefit us by him, in 296.